

COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR MANAGING MULTIPLE INCOMING COMMUNICATIONS, SUCH AS FROM ONE GRAPHICAL USER INTERFACE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)

- [0001] This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/235,989, titled Telephone Call Handling System and Method, Such as a Call Screening System Employing Standard Contact Management Software, filed September 28, 2000.

BACKGROUND

- [0002] People receive large numbers of communications daily. The communications include multiple mediums, for example voice calls, emails and facsimiles (faxes). Most individuals now have multiple "destinations" for communications within each medium. For example, an individual may have three telephone numbers, three email accounts, and two fax numbers. Communication modes and devices are proliferating. The convenience and utility that was originally intended to result from this communication capability is in danger of being overcome by the complexity of managing this same capability. Voice communication alone can become very complicated.

- [0003] Traditional voicemail systems, and other systems that record audio messages retrievable by telephone, require a user to have access to a telephone or related device and an appropriate telecommunications network to retrieve messages. Additionally, different voicemail systems require different procedures and inputs to retrieve messages. Voice message systems are designed and deployed based on the requirements of the environment in which they operate. As a result there are numerous voice message systems with a wide range of capabilities.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0004] **Figure 1** is block diagram illustrating an example of a system employing aspects of the invention.

[0005] **Figure 2** is a flow diagram illustrating call handling in one embodiment.

[0006] **Figures 3 through 12** are display screens showing a user interface for a call and contact management system under one embodiment of the invention. **Figure 3** is a display screen showing a suitable login display under this embodiment of the invention. **Figure 4** is a display screen showing a suitable display for message notification and call routing options. **Figure 5** is a display screen showing a suitable display for providing call monitoring. **Figure 6** is a display screen showing a suitable display of electronic messaging features with attendants. **Figure 7** is an enlarged display screen showing a new icon in the system tray of the task bar in the Microsoft Windows operating system. **Figure 8** is a display screen showing a suitable display for configuring general setup options. **Figure 9** is a display screen showing a suitable display for configuring notification options in a setup mode. **Figure 10** is a display screen showing a suitable display for configuring advanced options. **Figure 11** is a display screen showing a suitable display for adding or modifying attendant options. **Figure 12** is a display screen showing a suitable display for adding or modifying monitoring options.

[0007] **Figure 13** is a display screen showing a suitable appointment dialogue box under Microsoft Outlook, with new fields for routing calls under one alternative embodiment.

[0008] **Figures 14 through 27** are display screens showing a user interface for a standard call and contact management system under another alternative embodiment of the invention. **Figure 14** is a contacts management system display screen showing configuration options under this alternative embodiment. **Figure 15** is a contacts management system display screen showing account options. **Figure 16** is a contacts management system display screen showing notification options. **Figure 17** is a contacts management system display screen

showing notification sound options. **Figure 18** is a contacts management system display screen showing connection options. **Figure 19** is a contacts management system display screen showing call handling code options. **Figure 20** is a contacts management system display screen showing attendant options. **Figure 21** is a contacts management system display screen showing an active call handling option pull-down menu. **Figure 22** is a contacts management system display screen showing a pull-down menu for accessing a web site. **Figure 23** is a contacts management system display screen showing a call history. **Figure 24** is a contacts management system display screen showing current user status options. **Figure 25** is a contacts management system display screen showing a current incoming call screen. **Figure 26** is a contacts management system display screen showing call transfer options. **Figure 27** is a contacts management system display screen showing call transfer options and contact information.

[0009] In the drawings, identical reference numbers identify identical or substantially similar elements or steps. To easily identify the discussion of any particular element or step, the most significant digit or digits in a reference number refer to the figure number in which that element is first introduced (e.g., block 103 is first introduced and discussed with respect to Figure 1).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0010] A system for managing communications, described herein, is applicable to various types of communications, such as voice calls, emails and faxes. Embodiments include a method and apparatus for handling voice calls to multiple phone numbers through a single user interface. The user interface also allows access to the user's faxes and emails, and to the user's communication history and contact information. In one embodiment, the user is notified of any voice calls to one of several user devices. The user configures the system to handle incoming calls according to a user-defined configuration. For example, the system is configurable to route calls to various destinations, to access a history of